THE USE OF THE ECONOMIC TERMINOLOGY IN THE EPISTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS

SOME HERMENEUTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The nature of economics in the New Testament era

Since the philosophers have highlighted *homo economicus* as a representative type of the human being in the modern times, in the late 19th c., economics attracted the interest of all the disciplines and of the biblical studies as well. Nevertheless, since comparative economics has illustrated that the modern economic system is entirely different from the ancient one, it was perceived that the economy mirrored into the biblical writings should not be considered under the modern conception of economics. Nowadays it is clear that the economic reality of the New Testament— to limit myself in my subject—is a social and political phenomenon of the first centuries Roman societies, more specifically of the eastern Mediterranean provinces, that underlies the rules of the pre-industrial time with the local specificities of each one.

The most significant difference of those pre-modern societies is that economics was not a distinct field of the social life that could affect it with the free markets and the banking systems; it was subordinated to the political and religious institutions, it was configured by them and it reflected their values.

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1 The term ‘*homo economicus*’ was established respectively to the term ‘*homo sapiens*’ by the adversaries of the philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) and in reaction to him who in his work was concerned with the model of the man as “a being who desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end” (J. St. Mill, “On the Definition of Political Economy; and on the Method of Investigation Proper to It,” London and Westminster Review, October 1836. Essays on Some Unsettled Questions of Political Economy, 2nd ed. London: Longmans, Green, Reader & Dyer, 1874, essay 5, paragraphs 38 and 48). Cf Joseph Persky, "Retrospectives: The Ethology of Homo Economicus", *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 9, 2 (spring, 1995), 221-231, p. 222f.


It was not accidental that the coinages depicted the symbols of the ruling religious and political ideology and they were used for propagating it. The ancient economy was in fact what the Greek word means etymologically, i.e. the management of the household (οἶκος + νέμω = νέμω τὸν οἶκον, arrange the domestic affairs), which concerned the ensuring of the needs of the family and the discharge of the social obligations (religious or political) to the community.

Certainly, this was because these societies were peasant societies, with the anthropological sense of the term, i.e. wherein the social life was based on the rural house and on the ruralized city and wherein the status was not defined by the money but by the possession of land. There was a minimum oligarchy of the large landowners (about 2%), a majority of the small landowners (about 80-90%) that occupied slaves or tenants, and a small proportion of merchants and craftsmen (about 8%). The movement of goods was primal and the economic exchange took place mainly by the reciprocity. Reciprocity referred to an informal dyadic contract between two parts, usually two natural persons, according which one commodity was traded for another and a general continued mutual support was established. Economic exchange became, also, by a form of the redistribution through the state or temples taxation. The political and religious institutions collected a percentage of the local production and in another time even in another place, they used it for common and public interest.

Consequently, the ancient economics was quite a daily matter of the life, a social fact of direct personal and interpersonal relations. Because of this and for this the pre-modern economy had a moral feature corresponded to the moral concepts of those societies, entirely different from the so-called correct economy of our postmodern times. As some historians, and for New Testament Bruce Malina, have suggested, the conception of the limited good available to a person or a family by natural or social resources regulated the management of economics. It prohibited the improvement of one’s economic

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and social status, since this would be viewed as done at the expense of others and threatening the stability and the harmony of the entire community.

Ways of approaching New Testament text through economics

This purely social character of the ancient economy has a particular interest for the biblical exegesis from the aspect of the wider sociological hermeneutics. Really, several works have pointed out the interesting hermeneutical implications the study of the economic background of the Bible yields. Regarding New Testament, B. Malina’s and R. Rohrbaugh’s work is pioneer in this field as they provide sociological comments and socially-scientific models for reading the New Testament texts. Furthermore, Malina\(^6\) has applied fruitfully the resources of cultural anthropology on the New Testament analysis. D. Oakman\(^7\) has treated several economic issues of the Gospels. B.W. Longenecker and K.E. Liebengood\(^8\) have edited a considerable collection of essays on New Testament economics that indicate how the economic dimension was embedded in the theology of early Jesus movement and how this dimension was interpreted by the later Christian fathers. On the other hand, more or less long comments on the New Testament economic data occur in several relevant historical and exegetical works\(^9\).

Various ways of approaching New Testament texts through an economic analysis might be followed\(^10\). It might be followed a way to gather evidence for the economic background of New Testament; or to provide an economic analytical framework for interpreting the text either under theoretical economic theories; or to draw on the contemporary economic meanings a resource for the interpretation.

Our way of approaching

The way we are going to follow is defined by the point that economics during the New Testament times was a direct and individual event of the

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everyday life, a kind of personal and social code, to use a structuralist term\(^\text{12}\), through which the people expressed themselves and communicated each other. Furthermore, this code as a known and intimate language to all could be used metaphorically to express other issues as well, not only economics. From this aspect, by studying the economic language of a New Testament text it should be possible to understand more precisely the meanings uttered by this. For this study, it is necessary to know the economic reality of the New Testament world and it is useful to apply the theoretical framework of Semantics and Socio-linguistics in order to draw on a reliable exegetical resource.

**Philippians as a work case**

The Epistle to the Philippians is chosen as a work case, Paul’s Letter to the Christians of the Roman colony Philippi written while he was in prison, according to the general viewpoint, either in Ephesus about 55-56 A.D. or in Rome about 58-60 A.D. The *colonia Augusta Iulia Philippensis*, by its official Roman name, was a city with a great economic development\(^\text{13}\) because of the wealth of the region, agricultural, mineral, and maritime; because of its crucial situation on the Egnatia route and on the Gulf of Strymonicus through its seaport Neapolis; and primarily because of the economic privileges through the *Jus Italicum* granted by the Roman State. Therefore, Philippi was not a simple rural colony but also a commercial station\(^\text{14}\) of the province of Macedonia with trade relations around across the Mediterranean Sea.

Paul lived in Philippi and he was connected closely with several men and women of its society. They were Greeks and Romans, who were the majority, while there were a few Jews. They were in most farmers, but there were also traders and merchants, while there were a lot of slaves and freedmen. Besides, there was a considerable number of state officials and of course a number of craftsmen. When Paul wrote the Letter to them, he had obviously in his mind the way of their life and the daily matters, about which they concerned. Thus, the economic language of the Letter should be very

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\(^{14}\) However, the findings from the inscriptions have favored the conclusion for a rural city; cf. Fanoula Papazoglou, "Le territoire de la colonie de Philipes", *Bulletin de correspondence hellenique* 106 (1982): 89-106. This happened, maybe, because the more inscriptions come from the rural surrounding of the city. Philippi would not be, of course, a commercial centre like Corinth, but it should be *de facto* a transit trade, and it should have a well developed city market.
interesting for hermeneutical purposes. Nevertheless, there is no specialized study on this subject, although financial allusions have been marked in the Epistle to the Philippians by several scholars\textsuperscript{15}. An exception is Gerard W. Peterman’s study but especially on the sense of the gift-exchange between Paul and the Philippians\textsuperscript{16}.

In the following, we intend to highlight the economic and financial language in the Epistle to the Philippians and especially to illustrate the use of this economic language in this text by Paul for the formulating new Christian meanings. In addition, we intend to show how this linguistic usage is a defining factor for building a particular element of identity for the Christian community.

\textit{A semantic analysis of the text of Philippians}

To locate as integrated as possible the economic terminology in the Epistle to the Philippians it is necessary to take into account not only the diachronic known until now words for economics but also the synchronic to the New Testament text economic meanings, which are even the most important ones according to the modern Linguistics\textsuperscript{17}. Furthermore, it is necessary to take into account not only the words but also the contexts with reference to an economic perception and thinking, which are not found in the Lexicons but recognized through the Semantics\textsuperscript{18}.

Under these, scrutinizing the text of the Epistle to the Philippians from the viewpoint of its using an economic language as a communication code we might to discern the following semantic groups of words and contexts referred to economics realia and recalling economic performances:

\textit{The semantic word group of \textit{κοινωνία}}

First, we discern a semantic group with axis the sense of the word \textit{κοινωνία} (fellow-ship), which presents an economic meaning, even in some cases a technical meaning for defining a formalized or professional


association, a guild. Of course, this word seems to have not the technical meaning in the most New Testament passages, even in the Epistle to the Philippians (cf. 2:1; 3:10) and to have just the sense of participation, but putting it in a word environment with economic references it presents its economic denotation. Phil. 1:5-11 is a similar context with plain economic connotations (cf. vv. 10-11), where we could detect that Paul talks about the Philippians' κοινωνία (fellowship, v. 5) to the Gospel as if the Philippians are partners in a partnership, which he calls ἔργον ἀγαθόν (a good work, v. 6) and which is obviously the gospel's affair. Paul calls the Philippians also συγκοινωνοῦς (co-partners, v. 7) with him to the χάριν (grace), by which he obviously means again the Gospel's affair.

In continuousness, vv.12ff., Paul informs his co-partners about his work for the Gospel and he announces that τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ μᾶλλον εἰς προκοπὴν τοῦ εὐαγγελίου ἐλήλυθεν (as regards me, the things had become rather into the progress of the Gospel). Προκοπή (progress) is another word which applies to the prosperity of an affair, of an economic affair as well. Amplifying the reasons of this Paul writes τινὲς μὲν διὰ φθόνον καὶ ἔριν, τινὲς δὲ δι' εὐδοκίαν τὸν Χριστὸν κηρύσσουσιν, οἱ μὲν ἐξ ἀγάπης...οἱ δὲ ἐξ ἐρίθειας (some preach Christ even of envy and of strife, some of good will, the one of love...but the other of contention vv. 17-18). The words φθόνος (envy) and ἔρις (strife) describe a situation of rivalry that is usually caused between guilds, and especially the word ἐρίθεια (strife) describes literally the rivalry for the ἔριθος, that is the wage.

During his work for the Gospel Paul encounters χρείαν (necessity, 2:25· cf. 4:16), which he calls θλίψιν (affliction, 4:14) and which obviously is due – among other things – to economic straits that pressed and crushed him. Paul copes with it, because he had learnt to be αὐτάρκης (self-sufficient, 4:11) and because he had instructed καὶ ταπεινοῦσθαι καὶ περισσεύειν...καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν, καὶ περισσεύειν καὶ ὑστερεῖσθαι (both to be abased

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21 The meaning of financial sharing for the words κοινωνία, κοινωνώ has been pointed out by many scholars, nevertheless it has not been examined within its wider semantic context in the Epistle. Cf. for example, recently, Ben Witherington III, Paul’s Letter to the Philippians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary, Grand Rapids, Michigan: W.B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011, pp. 57-58.
and to abound, to be full and to be hungry, to abound and to forfeit, 4:12-13). All these words refer to real situations of financial deprivation to which the Philippians came to assistance by a financial giving22.

Describing this financial assistance from the Philippians Paul uses again the derivative words of κοινωνία (partnership) in collocational (syntagmatic, in praesentia) relations with other, clearly financial, words: συγκοινωνήσαντες μοι τῇ θλίψει...οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινώνησεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ύμεις μόνοι...καὶ ἀπαξ καὶ δίς εἰς τὴν χρείαν μοι ἐπέμψατε. Όυχ στα ἐπιζητῶ τὸ δόμα, ἀλλὰ ἐπιζητῶ τὸν καρπὸν τὸν πλεονάζοντα εἰς λόγον ύμών. Απέχω δὲ πάντα καὶ περισσεύω πεπλήρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἐπαφροδίτον τὰ παρ’ ύμων (you co-participated to my affliction...no church participated to me concerning an account of giving and receiving but you only...you sent into my necessity and once and twice; not because I desire the giving, but I desire the fruit being surplus to your account. I have got all and abound. I am ample satisfied having received by Epaphroditus those you have sent to me, 4:14-18)23.

Therefore, Epaphroditus is characterized by Paul by two other words denoting political –and economic, as well– services, by the words ἀπόστολος (ὑμῶν καὶ λειτουργὸς τῆς χρείας μου) (your delegate and minister of my necessity, 2:25). Moreover, λειτουργία (service, 2:30) is called the Philippians’ assistance to the apostle as a task of theirs within the frame of the partnership. Really, it is said that they lacked in doing it, so Epaphroditus was charged to fulfill it. Here we may think of the ancient economic rule of reciprocity between Paul’s giving of spiritual good and the Philippians’ giving back of material ones.

On the other side, Epaphroditus is considered by Paul as συνεργός (a fellow-worker, 2:25) in this κοινωνία (partnership) for the Gospel. Another companion in the labor is, also, Timotheus for whom Paul writes that ὡς πατρί τέκνον σὺν ἔμοι ἐδούλευσεν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (like a son to his father he served with me in the Gospel, 2:22). Both of them are presented as persons who should be considered honorable (ἐντίμους ἔχετε, 2:29) because of their unselfish services.

Furthermore, Paul says that his work is achieved διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἐπαινοῦν Θεοῦ (by Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God, 1:11) and διὰ τῆς ἐπιχορηγίας τοῦ Πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (by the subsidy of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, 1:19). Even, he assures that his God will repay the Philippians for their assistance and he suffices all their necessities according to his riches in glory in Jesus Christ (πληρώσει πάσαν χρείαν ύμών κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 4:19).

22 Note: giving and not gift, δόμα and not δῶρον.
23 Cf. a similar wording in 2 Co, ch. 8-9.
Within such an economic contextual sense and in semantic relationship with such words as ἐπιχορηγία (subsidy) and πλοῦτος (riches) it is plausible for God, Jesus Christ and Spirit to be appeared as partners in the work of Gospel or better as the Head of this, the Employer, the Contractor and the Provider, who bestows the rewards. Certainly, Paul uses these terms metaphorically for depicting a transcendent reality.

The semantic word group of κέρδος

Second, we discern a semantic group with axis the sense of the word κέρδος (gain), which preserves an economic meaning diachronically. However, as we have noted in the beginning, during that pre-modern time and under the perception of the limited good the gain, the profit, was not moral, since it became at the expense of others and by the hope of improvement of one’s social status, as to upset the community balance. Paul may take into account this notion, when he says that he prefers the life that is Christ than the death that is gain (Ἐμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος. Τὸ δὲ ἔπιμένειν ἐν τῇ σαρκί ἀναγκαίωτερον δι’ ὑμᾶς...Καὶ τούτῳ πεποιθὼς οἶδα ὅτι μενῶ καὶ παραμένω πάσιν ύμῖν εἰς τὴν ύμῶν προκοπήν καὶ χαρὰν τῆς πίστεως, 1:21-25).

Nevertheless, he speaks again metaphorically and he uses the word with a positive sense differentiating probably this gain from the shameful gain (αισχρὸν κέρδος cf. Tit 1:11). Even, it is remarkable that Paul uses the phrase “according to my earnest expectation and my hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed” (κατὰ τὴν ἀποκαραδοκίαν καὶ ἐλπίδα μου ὅτι ἐν οὐδενί αἰσχυνθήσομαι, 1:20), which could be associated to the hope of the gain, since it is used within an cohesion with the “subsidy of the Spirit” before it (1:19) and the context with the “gain” (1:21f.) after it. This hope had, also, an immoral dimension. In any case, Paul addresses to a society quite familiar to commercial and trade practices and, probably, he intends to upturn the word senses.

Indeed, he defines the gain with a new content. The gain as to the partnership to the Gospel –expressed by a term from agricultural economy– is καρποὶ δικαιοσύνης (fruits of righteousness, 1:19), i.e. the righteousness, καρπὸς ἐργοῦ (fruit of work, 1:22) and that οὐκ εἰς κενὸν ἐδραμον οὐδὲ εἰς κενὸν ἐκοπίασα (I have not run in vain neither labored in vain, 2:16), i.e. the

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results of the apostolic work, καρπὸς πλεονάζων εἰς λόγον ὑμῶν (fruit which abounds your account, 4:17), i.e. the assistance for the apostle.

Also, gain is τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (the excellent knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord, 3:8), ἡ διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ δικαιοσύνη, ἡ ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη ἐπί τῇ πίστει (the righteousness through the faith of Christ, the righteousness of God on faith, 3:9), τοῦ γνῶναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν τῆς ἀναστάσεως αὐτοῦ (to know Him and the power of his resurrection, 3:10). Primarily, gain for Paul is σὺν Χριστῷ εἶναι (to be with Christ, 1:21) or better Christ Himself, since he considers all rubbish only to gain Christ (τὰ πάντα...ηγοῦμαι σκύβαλα εἶναι, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω, 3:8). This is described in other words as σωτηρία (salvation, 1:19.28; 2:12).

On the opposite, Paul considers loss the righteousness through the Law and all his religious boasts considered gain before meeting Christ (3:4-11). He presents the enemies of his partnership, the enemies of the cross of Christ, as those who will work out at the perdition, whose god is their belly and whose glory is their shame, those who mind earthly things (ὡν τὸ τέλος ἀπώλεια, ὃν ὁ θεός ἡ κοιλία καὶ δόξα ἐν τῇ αἰσχύνῃ αὐτῶν, οἱ τὰ ἐπίγεια φρονοῦντες, 3:19). Expressions like perdition (i.e. loss), belly (i.e. goods), earthly things (i.e. welfare of living) in combination with words like glory and shame, that have a political and moral notion, deduce naturally to a primary economic concept.

After these, it is understood that the gain for Paul is spiritual and eschatological, and by no means has it constituted a threat for the community. On the contrary, it contributes to the improvement of all the members and to their cohesion, as we will see in the following.

The semantic word group of moral conduct

Finally, third, we discern a semantic group with axis the concept of a conduct regulation for the members of this particular partnership for the Gospel. Paul addresses to the Philippians several instructions that might be considered political and moral, but they might connate economic performances as well; much more, since in those times economics had an inseparable link with politics, to remind. Really, there are exhortations that could be quite directives for a good management of an affair. 1:10, you may test these which have profit, so that you may be sincere and unhindered in the Day of Christ (εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ύμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ)

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25 It is known that the word τὸ διαφέρον has usually got in ancient Greek the meaning of the interest or the balance, especially in the plural, τὰ διαφέροντα. In addition, the verb δοκιμάζω is frequently used for the consideration of and the looking at the best interest; see Kyriakoula Papademetriou, Ἀριστεία στὴν πρὸς Φιλιππησίους Ἐπιστολὴ τοῦ ἀπ. Παύλου (Excellence in the Epistle of St Paul to the Philippians), Thessaloniki: ed. Pournaras, 2012, pp. 138-139.
2:3-4, let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves, look not every man after his own things but every man also after the things of others (μηδὲν κατὰ ἐρίθειαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἄλληλοις ἁγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἀειτῶν, μὴ τὰ ἀειτῶν ἐκαστος σκοποῦντες, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ ἐτέρων ἐκαστοι)

2:15-16, you may be blameless and honest, ...holding the account for life (ἵνα γένησθε ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι, ...λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες)

4:5-6, let your moderation be known to all men, ...not have concern about anything (τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ύμῶν γνωσθῆτω πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις,...μηδὲν μεριμνᾶτε)

In these contexts, we highlight expressions with direct economic reference like διαφέροντα (interests, profits), ἐρίθεια (strife), τὰ ἀειτών καὶ τὰ ἐτέρων σκοποῦντες (look after one’s own things and after the other’s things), λόγον ζωῆς ἐπέχοντες (holding the account of life)26, μεριμνᾶτε (concern about). In addition, we detect words that could be unforced apply to economic practices, like δοκιμάζειν (test), εἰλικρινεῖς (sincere), ἄμεμπτοι καὶ ἀκέραιοι (blameless and honest), τὸ ἐπιεικὲς (the moderation), regarding e.g. issues of exchange and credits, of selling and purchasing. Certainly, the use of these words is again metaphoric and we cannot be sure how consciously technical was their usage by Paul and their listening by his readers. However, it is important for hermeneutical purposes to locate the origin of this imagery chosen by the apostle for presenting the new Christian concepts.

The process and the result of semantic modification

All these three semantic groups with economic oriented words quoted above confirm the observation made by the scholars27 that the writers of the New Testament, and the first Christians in all, drew upon the common language and culture of the Greek-speaking Roman provinces cities for creating their own special language and their own special social reality. It is apparent that Paul follows a particular process of modification for his

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26 Several scholars refer this phrase to God’s word which Christians are to hold fast so as to stand firm in the life-giving Gospel they received from Paul. Nevertheless, as they themselves admit, this is a doubtful interpretation of the phrase. Cf. for example Markus Bockmuehl, The Epistle to the Philippians, London: A. & C. Black, 1997, pp. 158-159.

27 Cf. Wayne A. Meeks, The First Urban Christians. The Social World of the Apostle Paul, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1983, p. 8: “It (the social world of early Christianity) has a double meaning, referring not only to the environment of the early Christian groups but also to the world as they perceived it and to which they gave form and significance through their special language and other meaningful actions. One is the world they shared with other people who lived in the Roman empire; the other, the world they constructed”. This thinking is developed in the chapter 3, “The Formation of the Ekklesia”, pp. 74-110.
purposes. He receives selectively the material from his cultural environment, he assimilates it creatively by adjusting or even upturning the senses, and he attaches to then the Christian content formulating by this way new senses.

Concretely, regarding the economic terminology in the Epistle to the Philippians, he takes the words associated more or less to contemporary economic wording as κέρδος, ζημία, λόγος, διαφέρουντα, πλούτος, ἐπιχορηγία but as well as κοινωνία, καρπός, δοκιμάζειν, ἐρίθεια, ἀπέχω καὶ πεπλήρωμαι, and by using them in proper conceptual contexts he empties them from their established content, he eliminates it by applying them in entirely opposite cases, and he reloading them with new content by attaching proper complements.

A very clear and explicit example for this process is the sentence: “What things was gain to me, I counted them loss for Christ” (3:7). Subsequently, he orders opposite to the mainstream: “let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves, look after one’s own things and after the other’s things” (2:3-4). On the other hand, he adds to the word “fruit” the complement “through Jesus Christ for the glory and the praise of God” (1:10), to the word “subsidy” the complement “of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (1:19), to the word “account” the complement “of life” (2:16; cf. 4:17), to the word “riches” the complement “in glory in Jesus Christ” (4:19), to the word “partnership” the complement “to the Gospel” (1:5), to the word “co-partners” the complement “in the grace” (1:7). He attaches a spiritual sense to the expression “test the profit” by the depended sentence “in order you may be sincere and unhindered in the Day of Christ” (1:10); similarly, the quality of the economic assistance becomes spiritual by charactering it as “an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God” (4:18).

These figures and metaphors are usually explained as simply an aesthetic effect. We think that it is not only stylistic choice for the writer, but a deeper expressive and communicative necessity; they concern the building of a new vocabulary to express and to present a new reality, a new human

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experience. The new senses of the old words function as a communicative code for the Christian communities and they become an element of their identity. Socio-linguistics has illustrated how the language usage sets boundaries and builds connections by similar mechanisms within groups.

Some hermeneutical Implications

Going over this study, we could point out, furthermore, some interesting hermeneutical implications:

a) The economic oriented words located above incurred the whole Epistle to the Philippians and, the most important, they interweave each other conceptually, and they show a remarkable semantic interrelation. This is a stylistic indication for one author and for one plot in the text.

b) There is consequence and persistence in the use of this terminology by the writer. He does not limit in some scattered words or phrases, but he expands his references to integrated economic images and performances. This is a rhetorical indication that the use is conscious and deliberate; probably the writer believes to the convincing power of this economic imagery.

c) There are literal economic references, since there is a real economic event, the sending of economic assistance by the addressees to the writer, but the majority of the economic usages are metaphoric and figurative. Anyway, these usages reflect the conventions were valid in the current reality, like the moral and political rules of reciprocity and of limited good. An emphasis is remarked to the commercial and trade terms. This is a sociolinguistic indication for the social features of the city of Philippi or better for the social status of a number of the members of the Christian community who were rather small merchants and craftsmen.

d) By such a wide use of economic terms in the Epistle to the Philippians, the ecclesia of Philippi is presented as a partnership with the contemporary political and economic features. Partners are all the members of the Christian community and Paul, as well as Timotheus, co-partners to the Philippians. That implies that this partnership has a universal dimension and belongs to the larger, worldwide Ecclesia of Christ. The work of this partnership is the preaching of the Gospel and the gain from this work is Christ Himself and to be with him, the situation of salvation. This is an eschatological good but it


bears to the partners now the righteousness and the life. God bestows his riches to the members, Jesus Christ undertakes the support, and the Spirit provides the supplements. Christians should have a correct conduct for selling to the others the goods of the Gospel and buying for themselves the Day of Christ. Here, we face to a new wording, a new expressive and communicative way, by which the life of Gospel is pictured not only so much valuable as the economics but far more.

Until now, several models for the formation of the ecclesia have been suggested: the household, the voluntary association, the synagogue, the philosophic or rhetorical school; also, the relations of family and of the friendship. According to Prof. Meeks “none of them captures the whole of the Pauline ecclesia, although all offer significant analogies”\textsuperscript{31} and we do not intend to suggest another model through the economic language of the Epistle to the Philippians\textsuperscript{32}. However, it would be appropriate to study the role of such a language for the creation of an anti-language, as it has been called\textsuperscript{33}–or, as I would prefer, of an ultra-language–, which built, besides other elements, the identity of the Christian community.

\textit{Kyriakoula Papademetriou}

\textsuperscript{31} W.A. Meeks, op. cit., p. 84.

\textsuperscript{32} Abraham J. Malherbe refers to the existence of trade and craft associations in early Christianity times and to their importance for understanding the organization of early Church (Social Aspects of Early Christianity, Louisiana State University Press, 1977, pp. 87-91).

ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Ἡ χρήση τῆς οἰκονομικῆς ὁρολογίας στὴν πρὸς Φιλιππησίους Ἐπιστολή.

Ὀρισμένες ἐρμηνευτικὲς ἐπιπτώσεις

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Ἡ φύση τῆς οἰκονομίας στὴν ἔποχή τῆς Καινῆς Διαθήκης

Ἡ ἀρχαία οἰκονομία ήταν μάλλον μία καθημερινὴ ὑπόθεση τῆς ζωῆς, ἕνα κοινωνικὸ γεγονός ἀμεσῶς προσωπικῶν καὶ διαπροσωπικῶν σχέσεων. Ἐξ αἰτίας αὐτοῦ καὶ γι’ αὐτὸ ἡ προ-νεωτερικὴ οἰκονομία εἶχε ἕνα ἡθικὸ χαρακτήρα, ποῦ ἀνταποκρινόταν στὶς ἡθικὲς ἀντιλήψεις ἐκείνων τῶν κοινωνιῶν.

Τρόποι προσέγγισης τοῦ καινοδιαθηκικοῦ κειμένου μέσῳ τῆς οἰκονομίας

Ὁ τρόπος ποὺ πρόκειται να ἀκολουθήσουμε καθορίζεται ἀπὸ τὴ θέση ὅτι ἡ οἰκονομία κατὰ τὴ διάρκεια τῶν καινοδιαθηκικῶν χρόνων ἦταν ἕνα ἀμεσο καὶ ἀτομικὸ γεγονός τῆς καθημερινῆς ζωῆς, ἕνα εἰδικὸ προσωπικοῦ καὶ κοινωνικοῦ κώδικα, γιὰ νὰ χρησιμοποιήσουμε ἕναν στροφικουσαλιστικὸ ὄρο, μέσῳ τοῦ ὁποίου οἱ ἀνθρώποι ἐκφέρονται καὶ ἐπικοινωνοῦσαν μεταξὺ τους. Γι’ αὐτὴ τὴ μελέτη, εἶναι ἀναγκαῖο νὰ γνωρίζουμε τὴν οἰκονομικὴ πραγματικότητα τοῦ καινοδιαθηκικοῦ κόσμου καὶ εἶναι χρήσιμο νὰ ἐφαρμόσουμε τὸ θεωρητικὸ πλαίσιο τῆς Σημασιολογίας καὶ τῆς Κοινωνιογλωσσολογίας, γιὰ νὰ ἀξιοποιήσουμε ἕνα αξιόπιστο ἐρμηνευτικὸ μέσο.

Μία σημασιολογικὴ ἀνάλυση τοῦ κειμένου τῆς πρὸς Φιλιππησίους

Θὰ μπορούσαμε νὰ διακρίνουμε τὶς ἀκόλουθες σημασιολογικὲς ὁμάδες λέξεων καὶ συναφειῶν, ποὺ ἀναφέρονται σὲ οἰκονομικὰ realia καὶ ἀνακαλοῦν οἰκονομικὲς παραστάσεις:

Ἡ σημασιολογικὴ ὁμάδα τῆς λέξεως κοινωνία
Τὸ Φιλ. 1, 5-11 εἶναι μία συνάφεια μὲ σαφεῖς οἰκονομικὲς συνδηλώσεις (πρβλ. 1, 10-11), ὅπου θὰ μπορούσαμε νὰ ἀναγνωρίσουμε ὅτι ὁ Παῦλος μιλᾶ γιὰ τὴν κοινωνία (στίχ. 5) τῶν Φιλιππησίων στὸ εὐαγγέλιο ὡς ἄνεν τὶς Φιλιππησίους νὰ εἶναι συνέταιροι σὲ μία ἐταιρεία, τὴν ὁποία καλεῖ ἔργον.
ἀγαθὸν (στίχ. 6) καὶ ἡ ὁποία εἶναι προφανῶς ἡ ύπόθεσι τοῦ εὐαγγελίου. Ο Παύλος καλεί τοὺς Φιλιπτήριους, ἐπίσης, συγκοινωνοῦσ (στίχ. 7) μαζὶ τοῦ στή χάριν, μὲ τὴν ὁποία προφανῶς ἐννοεῖ πάλι τὴν ύπόθεσι τοῦ εὐαγγελίου.
Οἱ λέξεις φθόνος καὶ ἔρις περιγράφουν μία κατάσταση ἀνταγωνισμοῦ, ποὺ προκαλεῖται συνήθως μεταξὶ τῶν συντεχνίων, καὶ εἰδικὰ ἡ λέξη ἔριθεια (1, 17-18) περιγράφει κυριολεκτικά τὸν ἀνταγωνισμὸ γαῖ τὸ ἔριθος, ποὺ εἶναι ὁ μισθὸς.
Ο Παύλος ἀντιμετωπίζει χρείαν (2, 25 πρβλ. 4, 16), τὴν ὁποία καλεῖ θλίψιν (4, 14). Ο Παύλος ἀντεπεξέρχεται σ’ αὐτὴν, ἐπειδὴ εἰχε μάθει νὰ εἶναι αὐτάρκης (4, 11) καὶ ἐπειδὴ εἰχε ἐκπαιδευθεῖ καὶ ταπεινωθεῖ καὶ περισσεῖν ... καὶ χορτάζεσθαι καὶ πεινᾶν, καὶ περισσεῖν καὶ χύστερα (4, 12-13).
Περιγράφοντας τὴν οἰκονομικὴ βοήθεια ἀπὸ τοὺς Φιλιπτήριους, ο Παύλος χρησιμοποιεῖ πάλι τὶς παράγωγες λέξεις τῆς λ. κοινωνία σὲ συνταγματικὲς (in praesentia) σχέσεις μὲ ἄλλες, σαφῶς οἰκονομικὲς, λέξεις: συγκοινωνησαντές μοι τῇ θλίψει ... συνδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως, εἰ μὴ ύψεις μόνο ... καὶ ἀπακτείκα δὶς εἰς τὴν χρείαν μοι ἐπέρεψατε. Οὐκ ὃτι ἐπίζηστο τὸ δόμα Διὰ πάντα καὶ περισσεῶν πεπλήρωμαι δεξάμενος παρὰ Ἑπαφροδίτου τὰ παρ’ ύμων (4, 14-18).
Ἑξ ἄλλου, ὁ Ἐπαφρόδιτος θεωρεῖται ἀπὸ τὸν Παύλῳ ὡς συνεργὸς (2, 25) σ’ αὐτὴν τὴν κοινωνία γαῖ τὸ εὐαγγέλιο. Ἐνας ἄλλος σύντροφος στὸν κόσμο εἶναι, ἐπίσης, ὁ Τιμόθεος, γιὰ τὸν ὁποῖον ὁ Παύλος γράφει ὡς πατρὶ τέκνῳ ποὺ ἐστὶν ἔσοδον ἐργασίας τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (2, 22).
Περαιτέρω, ὁ Παύλος λέει ὅτι τὸ ἔργον τοῦ κατορθώνεται διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόζαν καὶ ἑπαίνον Θεοῦ (1, 11) καὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιστροφῆς τοῦ Πνευματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1, 19). Ἀκόμη, βεβαιώνει ὅτι ὁ Θεός τοῦ πληρώσει πᾶσαν χρείαν ὑμῶν κατὰ τὸ πλοῦτος αὐτοῦ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (4, 19).

Ἡ σημαιολογικὴ ὁμάδα τῆς λέξεως κέρδος
Ο Παύλος λέει ὅτι προτιμά τῇ ζωῇ ποὺ εἶναι ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπὸ τὸν θάνατο ποὺ εἶναι κέρδος (Εμοὶ γὰρ τὸ ζῆν Χριστὸς καὶ τὸ ἀποθανεῖν κέρδος, 1, 21). Περαιτέρω, ὁρίζει τὸ κέρδος μὲ ἕνα νέο περιεχόμενο. Τὸ κέρδος ὡς πρὸς τὴ συμμετοχὴ στὸ εὐαγγέλιο –ἐκφραζόμενο μὲ ὅρους γεωργικῆς οἰκονομιᾶς– εἶναι καρποὶ δικαιοσύνης (1, 22), δηλαδὴ ἡ δικαιοσύνη, καρπὸς ἐργοῦ (1, 22) καὶ ὅτι ὅντος εἰς κενὸν ἐδραμον ὑπὸ εἰς κενὸν ἐκτίσσα (2, 16), δηλαδὴ τὰ ἀποτελέσματα τοῦ ἀποστολικοῦ ἐργοῦ, καρπὸς πλεονάζων εἰς λόγον ὕμων (4, 17), δηλαδὴ ἡ βοήθεια γαῖ τὸν ἀπόστολο.
Ἐπίσης, κέρδος εἶναι τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (3, 8), ἡ διὰ πίστεως Χριστοῦ δικαιοσύνη, ἢ ἐκ Θεοῦ δικαιοσύνη ἐπί τῇ πίστει (3, 9), τον γνώναι αὐτὸν καὶ τὴν δύναμιν αὐτοῦ (3, 10).
Πρωτίστως, κέρδος γιά τόν Παύλο εἶναι σῦν Χριστῷ εἶναι (1, 21) ἦ μᾶλλον ὁ ἱδιος ὁ Χριστός, ἀφοῦ θεωρεῖ τὰ πάντα σκουπίδια, μόνο νὰ κερδίσει τὸν Χριστό (τὰ πάντα ἦγον μαί σκύβαλα εἶναι, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσῃ, 3, 8). Αὐτὸ περιγράφεται μὲ ἄλλα λόγια ὡς ωστηρία (1, 19, 28· 2, 12).

Αντίθετα, ὁ Παύλος θεωρεῖ ἦμια τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ μέσῳ τοῦ Νόμου καὶ ὄλα τὰ θρησκευτικὰ καυχήματα ποὺ θεωροῦσε κέρδος, πρὶν συναντήσει τὸν Χριστό (3, 4·11).

Η σημασιολογικὴ ὁμάδα λέξεων ἡθικῆς συμπεριφοράς

Υπάρχουν προτροπές, ποὺ θὰ μποροῦσαν νὰ εἶναι μᾶλλον ὀδηγίες γιὰ τὴν καλὴ διαχείριση μᾶς ὑπόθεσης:

1, 10, εἰϛ τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τὰ διαφέροντα, ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστὸν
2, 3-4, μηδὲν κατὰ ἐρθείαιν μηδὲ κατὰ κενδοξίαν, ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἄλληλους ἐγνώμονοι ὑπερέχοντας ἅπαστὶν, μὴ τὰ ἅπαστὶν ἕκαστος σκοπούντες, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι
2, 15-16, ἵνα γένησθε ἀμεμπτοὶ καὶ ἀκέραιοι, ... λόγον ὧς ἑπέχοντες
4, 5-6, τὸ ἐπιεικὲς ὑμῶν γνωσθῆτα πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ... μηδὲν μεριμνάτε.

Η διαδικασία καὶ τὸ ἀποτέλεσμα τῆς σημασιολογικῆς μετάλλαξης

Εἶναι φανερὸ ὁ Ὅλος ἀκολουθεῖ μία ἰδαιτέρη διαδικασία μετάλλαξης γιὰ τοὺς σκοποὺς του. Προσλαμβάνει ἐπιλεκτικὰ τὸ υλικὸ ἀπὸ τὸ πολιτιστικὸ περιβάλλον του, τὸ ἄφοινόι οἱ δημιουργικὲς προσαρμοζόντας ἢ ἀνατρέποντας τὶς ἐννοιὲς, καὶ ἀποδίδει σ’ αὐτὲς τὸ χριστιανικὸ περιεχόμενο διαμορφώνοντας μ’ αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπο νέες ἐννοιὲς. Συγκεκριμένα, ὅσων ἀφορᾶ στὴν οἰκονομικὴ ὁρολογία τῆς πρὸς Φιλιππησίους, παῖρε τὶς λέξεις ποὺ συνδέονται κατὰ τὸ μᾶλλον ἢ ἕτον μὲ τὴ σύγχρονη τὴν οἰκονομικὴ διατύπωση, ὡς κέρδος, ἦμια, λόγος, διαφέροντα, πλοῦτος, ἐπιχορηγία, ἀλλὰ ἐπίσης καὶ κοινωνία, καρπός, δοκιμάζειν, ἐρίθεια, ἀπέχω καὶ πεπλήρωμαι, καὶ χρησιμοποιώντας τές σὲ κατάλληλες νοηματικὲς συνάφειες, τὶς ἀδειάζει ἀπὸ τὸ καθερωμένο περιεχόμενο του, ἀπορρίπτει αὐτὸ τὸ περιεχόμενο ἔφαρμοζόντας τές σὲ ἕντελος ἀντίθετες περιπτώσεις, καὶ τές ἐπαναφορτίζει μὲ νέο περιεχόμενο ἀποδίδοντας σ’ αὐτὲς κατάλληλας προσδιορισμοὺς.

Γιὰ παράδειγμα, προσθέτει στὴ λέξη καρπὸς τὸν προσδιορισμὸ δικαιοσύνης διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ εἰς δόξαν καὶ ἔπαινον Θεοῦ (1, 10), στὴ λέξη ἔπαραγη τὸν προσδιορισμὸ τὸν Πνεύματος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ (1, 19), στὴ λέξη λόγος τὸν προσδιορισμὸ ἔρωτας (2, 16· πρβλ. 4, 17), στὴ λέξη πλοῦτος τὸν προσδιορισμὸ ἐν δόξῃ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ (4, 19), στὴ λέξῃ κοινωνία τὸν προσδιορισμὸ εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον (1, 5), στὴ λέξῃ συγκοινωνοῦ τὸν προσδιορισμὸ τῆς χάριτος (1, 7). Αποδίδει μία πνευματικὴ ἐννοια στὴν ἐκφάση δοκιμάζειν τὰ διαφέροντα μὲ τὴν ἐξαρτημένη πρόταση ἵνα ἦτε εἰλικρινεῖς καὶ ἀπρόσκοποι εἰς ἡμέραν Χριστοῦ (1, 10· παρόμοια, ἢ
οἰκονομική βοήθεια χαρακτηρίζεται ως σομή ευνοίας, θυσία δεκτή, εὐάρεστος τῶν Θεῶν (4, 18).

Αυτές οἱ εἰκόνες καὶ οἱ μεταφορές ἐξηγοῦνται συνήθως ἀπλά ως ἕνα αἰσθητικό ἀποτέλεσμα. Φρονούμε ότι δὲν εἶναι μόνο ύφος λογοτεχνική ἐπιλογή γα τὸν συγγραφέα, ἀλλὰ μία βαθύτερη ἐκφραστική καὶ ἐπικοινωνιακὴ ἀναγκαίωση ἀφοροῦν στὴ δόμηση ἐνὸς νέου λεξιλογίου, γα νὰ ἐκφράσει καὶ νὰ παρουσιάσει μία νέα πραγματικότητα, μία νέα ἀνθρώπινη ἐμπειρία.

Ορισμένες ἐρμηνευτικὲς ἐπιπτώσεις

Ἀνασκοπώντας αὐτή τῇ μελέτῃ, Θα μποροῦσαμε νὰ ἐπισημάνουμε περαιτέρω ὁρισμένες ἐνδιαφέρουσες ἐρμηνευτικὲς ἐπιπτώσεις: α) Οἱ οἰκονομικὰ προσανατολισμὲνες λέξεις, ποὺ ἐντοπισθηκαν παρατάνω, διατρέχουν ὅλης ἡν ἐπιστολὴ πρὸς Φιλιππησίους καὶ, τὸ σπουδαῖότερο, διατλέκονται μεταξὺ τῶν ἐννοιολογικῶν καὶ παρουσιάσουν μία ἀξισμηνεύση σημασιολογικὴ ἀλληλοσυνεχεία. Αὐτὸ ἀποτελεῖ μία ύφος λογοτεχνικὴ ἐνδειξίς γα ἐνὶ συγγραφέα καὶ γα μία πλοικ ὑπὸ κείμενο. β) Ὕπαρξη συνεπίες καὶ ἐπιμονὴ στὴ χρήση αὐτῆς τῆς ὁρολογίας ἀπὸ τὸν συγγραφέα. Δὲν περιορίζεται σὲ μερικὲς διασκορπισμένες λέξεις ἡ φράσεις, ἀλλὰ ἐπεκτείνει τὶς ἀναφορὲς του σὲ ὅλοκληρομένες οἰκονομικὲς καὶ παραστάσεις. Αὐτὸ ἀποτελεῖ μία ἡθορικὴ ἐνδείξη ὅτι η χρήση εἶναι συνειδητὴ καὶ σκοτίτη πιθανὸν ὁ συγγραφέας πιστεῖ ὅτι πειστικὴ δύναμη αὐτῆς τῆς οἰκονομικῆς εἰκονοποιίας. γ) Ὕπαρχουν κυριολεκτικὲς ἀναφορὲς, ἀφοῦ ὑπάρχει ἕνα οἰκονομικὸ γεγονός, ἡ ἀποστολὴ οἰκονομικῆς βοήθειας ἀπὸ τοὺς παραλήπτες στὸν συγγραφέα, ἀλλὰ ἡ πλεονότητα τῶν οἰκονομικῶν χρήσεων εἶναι μεταφορικὲς καὶ συμβολικὲς. Μία ἐμφάση παρατηρεῖται στὸν ἐμπορικὸ καὶ ἐμπορευματικὸς ὄρος. Αὐτὸ ἀποτελεῖ μία κοινονιογλωσσικὴ ἐνδείξη γα τὰ κοινωνικὰ χαρακτηριστικὰ τῆς πόλεως τῶν Φιλίππων ὡς μᾶλλον γα τὸ κοινωνικὸ status ἀρχηγῶν μελῶν τῆς χριστιανικῆς κοινότητας, οὶ ὁποῖοι ἦταν μᾶλλον μικρέμποροι καὶ τεχνίτες.

d) Μέ μία τέτοια χρήση οἰκονομικῶν ὄρων στὴν πρὸς Φιλιππησίους, ἡ ἐκκλησία τῶν Φιλίππων παρουσιάζεται σὰν μία ἔταιρεια μὲ τὰ σύγχρονα τῆς πολιτικῆς καὶ οἰκονομικῆς χαρακτηριστικά. Μέτοχοι εἶναι ὅλα τὰ μέλη τῆς χριστιανικῆς κοινότητας, καὶ ὁ Παύλος, καθὼς ἔπιος καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, εἶναι συνέταιροι μὲ τοὺς Φιλιππησίους. Αὐτὸ ύπονοι ὅτι αὐτὴ ἡ ἔταιρεια ἔχει μία παγκόσμια διάσταση καὶ ἀνήκει στὴν εὐφύτηρη σὲ ὅλον τὸν κόσμο Ἐκκλησία τοῦ Χριστοῦ. Ἐδώ, βρισκόμαστε ἀντιμέτωποι μὲ μία νέα διατύπωση, ἔναν νέο ἐκφραστικὸ καὶ ἐπικοινωνιακὸ τρόπο, μὲ τὸν ὁποῖο ἡ ἐκκλησία τοῦ εὐαγγελίου εἰκονογραφεῖται όχι μόνο τόσο πολύτιμη ὡς ὁ οἰκονομικὸς, ἀλλὰ πολὺ περισσότερο.